

## ABSTRACT

**THESIS:** *Polly v. Lasselle*: Slavery in Early Indiana

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This research presents a comprehensive narrative of the development of slavery in early Indiana history. It chronicles the evolution from a French system of slavery to one influenced by Virginian legal code. In exploring the nature of the practiced slavery and the obstacles to slavery's implementation, the evidence demonstrates that while Indiana did practice slavery, the state was never at risk of developing a plantation-style slave society. The 1820 Indiana Supreme Court case *Polly v. Lasselle*, which officially ended any legal form of slavery in the state, exemplifies the evolution of slavery and the constantly changing power relationship between owner and slave. By means of previously unused primary sources, this thesis creates a new account of the court case and places it within the context of Indiana's slavery history.